

From: Darilyn Parry Brown [<mailto:darilyn@hellscanyon.org>]

Sent: Wednesday, February 22, 2017 11:48 AM

To: Montoya, Tom -FS <tmontoya@fs.fed.us>; Stein, Kris -FS <krisstein@fs.fed.us>

Cc: mary_gautreaux@wyden.senate.gov; Karen Wagner <kwagner@wtechlink.us>;

kathleen_cathey@wyden.senate.gov; Pena, James - FS <jpena@fs.fed.us>; veronica@hellscanyon.org

Subject: WWNF Lostine River Corridor project HCPC concerns

Supervisor Montoya and Ranger Stein,

I am writing on behalf of Hells Canyon Preservation Council (HCPC) and our members to, again, ask you to stop pushing the Lostine Corridor project forward under the guise of the Wyden Authority/2104 Farm Bill Categorical Exclusion. In order to use this CE authority, projects must be developed in a transparent inclusive collaborative manner, which was not the case with this project. Prior to approving activities in the corridor, an appropriate and lawful process must be followed. At this juncture, I am convinced the best path forward for the Lostine Corridor project would be to conduct the appropriate NEPA this project deserves and requires, conducting either an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or Environmental Analysis (EA) at the least, and providing the public with Alternatives to consider and weigh in on.

HCPC has clearly conveyed our concerns with this project to the Forest Service, through scoping, in letters, and through in-person meetings. (Please see attached correspondence.) Our attempts to work with the district have been ignored or dismissed. Mr. Pena did not respond to our letter dated 8/23/16; Tom, you did not respond to our letter dated 11/22/16.

I understand the decision on this controversial project could be signed as soon as this week. This is not acceptable.

A few of our concerns are re-enumerated here:

- The Forest Service has **misrepresented the public process** around this project.
- The agency is claiming that it collaborated with local landowners and others, including those in the conservation community. This is inaccurate. The agency has informed local landowners about what it plans on doing in the river corridor but has not “collaborated” with landowners or other stakeholders.
- **Any proposed management activities in the Lostine River Corridor deserve a robust transparent public process that looks at alternatives to what the Forest Service is proposing and finds a way to balance protection of this unique area with public safety.**
- Management activities in the corridor should not be at the expense of wildlife, fish, sensitive and rare plants, old and large trees and visual impacts.
- The wild and scenic nature of the corridor must be maintained.

- Logging in sensitive old growth forests and associated temporary road construction are ill advised and won't do much to make the public or firefighters safer when a wildfire occurs in the corridor. The proposed activities will however have an adverse effect on the wild and scenic nature of the corridor along with the rare and threatened species that call it home.
- Simply informing the public of what the agency is planning on doing in the corridor does not meet the agency's duty to look at the potentially significant effects of what is being proposed or to provide for meaningful public involvement in land management decisions.

During our meeting with you, Kris, and Assistant District Ranger Lubera at the Wallowa Valley Office in September last year, Veronica and I were made aware the Lostine Corridor project is just the first of several projects the district intends to fast-track through the CE process. If the Lostine Corridor project is an indication of the process and the sorts of projects the district is considering putting forward through the Farm Bill CE, we are deeply alarmed!

I assert the Lostine Corridor project does not meet the requirements or the intent of the Farm Bill CE. I urge you to step back, engage with the public and interested stakeholders like HCPC, and conduct the appropriate NEPA in order to conduct a project that has a strong likelihood of increasing public safety while appropriately protecting the multiple values and resources of the exceptional Lostine River corridor.

As always, we are eager to work with you and your staff to ensure an ecologically sound, far less controversial, and truly beneficial project moves forward.

Sincerely,

Darilyn Parry Brown
Executive Director
Hells Canyon Preservation Council
PO Box 2768, La Grande, OR 97850

541-963-3950 x 1001

www.hellscanyon.org

Connecting, protecting, and restoring the Greater Hells Canyon wild lands for future generations since 1967!

Follow us on...



Check out our [Blog](#)!